United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- General Assembly votes 111 in favour to 25 against with 13 abstentions to to repeal resolution 3379 (1975) equating zionism with racism.

- Security Council decides that conditions for peace-keeping operation in Yugoslavia still do not exist, but endorses dispatch of preparatory group scheduled to leave for Belgrade tomorrow, 17 December.

- Government of El Salvador and FMLN begin negotiations in New York with participation of Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Central America.

- Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia call for removal of Soviet troops from their territory saying Soviet presence threatens "peace and security in Baltic area".

- Fifth Committee recommends $46 million appropriations for peace-keeping operation in Cambodia and for Iraq-Kuwait observer mission.

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By a recorded vote of 111 in favour to 25 against, with 13 abstentions, the General Assembly today repealed its 1975 resolution 3379 which equates Zionism with racism.

The resolution was introduced by United States Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence S. Egleburger who said his Government had rejected the characterization of zionism in 1975 and had worked for its revocation ever since. Noting that the repeal of resolution 3379 had been called for by United States President George Bush in his address to the Assembly last September, Mr. Eagleburger said its sole aim "was to right a wrong and restore the moral authority of the Organization".

In other activities today, the Assembly observed the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the

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Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In a statement to the Assembly, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said that over the years, the Covenants had provided a "solid foundation" for the development of a variety of other human rights instruments, including those relating to the fight against torture and the promotion of the rights of women, of children and of migrant workers and their families, as well as the fight against racial discrimination and apartheid. Looking to the future, the Secretary-General said, "we cannot but feel a sense of dismay at the tragic realities of the world in which we live", where the tyranny of power, poverty and discrimination too often brutalizes human beings. In such a world he said, the protection of the weak and the vulnerable required that the implementation of the human rights instruments assume a quality of moral urgency.

Also today, the Assembly paid tribute to the Secretary-General for his ten years of service to the United Nations. Assembly President Samir S. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia) said that over the years, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar had become well known for his dignity and generous leadership, and wisdom and courage of his convictions. He stated that the Secretary-General was leaving the Organization with a distinguished record of accomplishments, which had greatly enhanced the prestige and international authority of the world body.

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The Security Council has agreed that the conditions for establishing a United Nations peace-keeping operation in Yugoslavia "still do not exist".

However, under its unanimous decision yesterday morning, the Council, at the same time, endorsed the Secretary-General's offer to send a group of personnel, including military personnel, to prepare for the deployment of a peace-keeping operation. That group would be attached to the mission of his Personal Envoy to Yugoslavia, Mr. Cyrus Vance.

The Council indicated that full compliance with the cease-fire agreement, signed on 23 November in Geneva, would permit accelerated consideration of the placement of a peace-keeping force in Yugoslavia.

In its resolution, the Council also urged all States and parties to refrain from any action that might inhibit the establishment of a cease-fire. It further asked all countries to report to the Secretary-General within 20 days on the measures they have taken to implement a complete arms embargo on Yugoslavia, and decided to establish a Committee devoted to gathering information on the embargo.

In a reply on 14 December to a letter from the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the Secretary-General said that his previous letter of 10 December to Mr. Genscher had not stated that recognition of the independence of particular Yugoslav Republics should be denied, or withheld indefinitely. Rather, he said, the principle of self-determination was enshrined in the United Nations Charter itself. His concerns were related

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to the prospects of "early, selective and uncoordinated recognition", Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said.

Early selective recognitions could result in widening of the present conflict to those sensitive areas, the Secretary-General said -- a concern also expressed by the Presidents of Bosnia-Hercegovina and Macedonia, as well as by many others. Such a development, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar continued, could have grave consequences for the Balkan region as a whole, and it would seriously undermine his efforts and those of his Personal Envoy, Mr. Cyrus Vance, to secure the conditions necessary for the deployment of a peace-keeping operation in Yugoslavia.

In a related development, a United Nations spokesman announced today that the Secretary-General's team, led by Mr. Herbert Okun, Mr. Vance's adviser, was scheduled to leave for Belgrade tomorrow, 17 December.

Team members were not going to observe the cease-fire, which was a function of European Economic Community (EEC) observers, the spokesman said. Rather, the Secretary-General's team was going "to carry forward preparations for possible deployment of a peace-keeping operation", as stated in yesterday's Security Council resolution.

The 21-man team would be made up of about twelve military personnel, each representing one country, two civilian police and seven supporting staff.

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A United Nations spokesman announced today that delegations of the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) had begun their meetings today in New York with the participation of the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Central America, Mr. Alvaro de Soto. Talks were being held at the level of negotiating commissions and conducted separately, the spokesman said.

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The three Baltic States -- Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia -- have called for the removal of Soviet troops from their territory, saying that Soviet presence there represented "a threat to peace and security in the Baltic area".

In a letter last Friday to the Secretary-General, the Baltic Permanent Representatives to the United Nations asserted that as the Soviet Union disintegrates, there exists the real possibility that the former Soviet Union will be unable to continue to govern the activities of its armed forces stationed in the their countries.

They stated that when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics recognized their independence on 6 September, no measures were taken by the Soviet Union to withdraw its "sizeable and well-armed forces" from the territory of these countries. They further asserted that there was no treaty "or any other agreement" permitting the Soviet Union to station its armed forces in Estonia,

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Latvia or Luthuania, adding that there was no justification for Soviet armed forces to remain on the territory of these States.

The three Baltic Representatives urged that the United Nations closely monitor the developing situation, stressing that the Organization could play an effective role in reducing the threat posed by the presence of the troops.

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The General Assembly's Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) yesterday approved over $46 million for two peace-keeping operations, following debate on the financing of missions in Cambodia and Iraq.

Nearly $14 million was approved for the six-month period of the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC), beginning 1 November. And over $33 million was approved for the financing of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) for the period 9 October 1991 to 8 April 1992.

In other action yesterday, the Committee approved $360,000 for United Nations Human Rights activities during the next biennium, which would provide for the public information activities relating to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights.

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